

# Monastic Musings

News and Views of the Eastern Rite Monastics  
of the  
Ohio Orthodox Catholic Church

August 2011

## *From the Idle keyboard*

*by: schema-Archimandrite Barb*

Summer is slowly drawing to a close. For many people this means getting back into the usual routine of going to work/school forty hours a week, or even more, and then home to do whatever they have to do with what little time they may have left in the day. Often it means that God and/or church is the furthest thought from their minds! We get so caught up in the mundane everyday things that we forget to invite God into our lives. We get into the mode of we can do it ourselves and don't need to ask God for help. But then you just find yourself in a mess because of what you are doing or not doing. What is the first thing you will do: Blame it on God! Now how can you blame it in God if you did not ask for God's help, or if you did ask for help and did not follow the guidance? Ah, it feels better to blame God for everything wrong in your life, you figure. Well, excuse me, God is Love so why would He not give you the help you desire? I think we often have our priorities mixed up and thus make a mess of our lives.

I was working with a young man not too long ago trying to help him understand why his life was going in the direction it was – downward. He could not realize that what was happening in his life was his own doing. It was so much easier to blame everything and everyone else but himself. He had not gotten to the actual point, or I don't think so, of blaming God for his problems, but he surely was close to it. He always insisted that his life was focused on God, but I could tell that was not the case. He was trying to make things better for himself, and he could not grasp the idea that you have to really let God walk with you, listen to Him, and do His will – even when God's will differs from what you want.

We as humans have to remember that we make the world that we live in through that gift of "free will" that God gave us when Adam and Eve were thrown out of the Garden. We have the choice of asking God for help and then listening and following the instructions, or going on doing as we please. Let me tell you, not listening to what God says can really lead to trouble in the long run. And no, you cannot ask God after the fact. When you think about it, that is usually what we do. We go about our day doing what we want to do and then when things mess up we blame God. As my paternal grandmother would say, "you put the cart before the horse so what did you expect, perfection!"



What we all have to learn is this: Pray to God, listen and then follow His instructions. This means, as you get up in the morning, the first thing out of your mouth or in your mind is asking God to join and guide you through your day, to walk with you and help you to make the correct decisions necessary. It means you need to listen to the guidance! No copping the attitude of you know better what needs to be done or why ask God for help. At the end of the day, you need to take at least five minutes to hold a conversation with God, reviewing the day and even saying thank you to God for being with you on your journey.

If we all learn to walk with God constantly can you imagine what this world would be like! It could lead to no more wars, people working together for the betterment of the rest of the people. No more “me” syndrome but “us” syndrome. My goodness, the world could be a really peaceful and joyful place to live instead of a place of fear. Would it mean that there would be no crime? Well, not really as there will always be those who will put their needs first. But, if each of us just elects to have God walk with us each and every moment of the day, things slowly would change and then the world could be a place of peace and love. Maybe, people would learn to get along and understand that there is really only one God although He goes by many names depending on your particular religious faith.

This means that we have to realize that we often come into contact with people who can help us on our journey. These people are sent to us by God to help us. We have a habit of turning these people away or ignoring them. Why? Would it not be more pleasant to have a partner on your journey? Is it not easier to think things through when you are “bouncing ideas” around with another person? Does not time pass faster and is it not more enjoyable when you have another person walking with you? It is time for us to get beyond the idea that we can do everything better and learn to reach out for help in our lives. We seem to be really making a mess with our lives on our own. It is time to put away hatred because someone does not believe as you do since maybe that person is the person God has chosen to walk the journey with you. They have something to share with you to make your life a little bit better. We love to be judgmental in everything we do or say.

If we are going to call ourselves the children of God, then we have to live as those children. The holy books of so many of the religions in this world teach us that the way we are to live is to love and respect others as we would want to be loved and respected. Yes, there are always those who will radicalize their faith, and I am not talking about them, although we need to find a way of showing love to them also. I am talking about the everyday believer of their faith, who live their lives as they are taught – with love and respect.

Over my many years of walking on this earth I have met many people of many different religion/faiths. It has always been a joy to sit and share beliefs with them. We learn so much about one another and come together in love and respect. It helps to remove the fears we may have because they are “different”. What I have enjoyed the most has not been just the friendships that have developed, but the greater understanding of my faith and how their faith is so much like mine! It is a real eye opener if you are willing to just sit, ask and listen to what others are saying. Yes, mankind will always want to fight over whose faith/religion is the better one. But, if you just take a chance and communicate openly with someone outside of your faith,

you too will have your eyes opened and your heart filled with so much love. Take that chance. What do you have to lose?

Let me close with this little story. There was a great river flood and the man decided he better get to the roof of his house if he wanted to be rescued. He knew that as a person who believed in God, God would come to save him if he just asked. So he perched himself on the roof point and asked God to come and save him. While he was waiting a boat with a person not of his faith came by and offered to take him to safety. The man on the roof said not thanks as God will come to rescue me. Another person came by who was not of his nationality and offered to take him to safety. But again he refused the help. Then another boat came by with a person of different sexual orientation and offered him a ride. But once again he refused saying that God would come to rescue him. After a while the man yelled at God "why am I still sitting this roof". God very gently said, "I sent you several people to rescue you, but you refused their help". Do you tend to refuse the help that God sends you?

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### ***Journey to Discipleship – The Beatitudes (Part 7)***

*by: Rev. Mother Myrella LeClair*

Although we have concluded our study of The Beatitudes, our journey to discipleship is not at its end but at its beginning. Putting into practice what Christ has taught us is a lifelong process if we truly desire to abide in Him and have Him abide in us in every moment of our lives. Discipleship requires single-minded commitment and constant spiritual vigilance on our parts to follow the Way. God the Father has given us His Grace, if we are willing to receive it. He has given us His Son to provide us with "living water" and the "bread of life" for sustenance along the journey, and He has given us the Holy Spirit to guide us along the way and to comfort us and encourage us when we "walk through the shadows". Lastly, our Father has given us one another since, as with most journeys, we need each other's help to overcome the obstacles along the Way. Let us review the Beatitudes so that we become aware of the obstacles that we may encounter along the Way.

*"Blessed are the poor in spirit, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven."* Have you acknowledged your need for and dependency on God? Pride is the major obstacle to finding one's true self in our relationship with God. What have you done to bring your goals and desires into line with Christ's call to humility and obedience? When you pray, is your prayer the prideful prayer of the Pharisee or is it the humble prayer of the Publican?

*"Blessed are those who mourn, For they shall be comforted"*. Have you learned to approach God with a deep sorrow for your sins and sought His mercy and forgiveness? Unrepentance is the rock that you will continually stumble over if you are still walking along the Way on autopilot – making excuses for your failings, continuing to repeat the same patterns of thought and behavior, and stubbornly clinging to your self-righteousness.

*"Blessed are the meek, For they shall inherit the earth."* Do you equate being meek with being a doormat? If so, then you have misunderstood Christ's message and fallen into the pit of arrogant self-interest. However, if you have you learned to see God in everything, to listen attentively, and to have no will apart from God's Will then you have understood what it means to be "meek". Meekness is "controlled strength". The meek are strong because they allow God to shape them rather than allow their egos (self-interest) to do so.

*“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, For they shall be filled.”* Do you “hunger and thirst” to do God’s Will? Do you spend time communicating with God, speaking to Him from your heart and listening to His voice? If not, then perhaps you have tripped upon the prickly vine of complacency, leaving behind the spiritual sustenance that God has provided to you for your journey. When we spend time in prayer, hungering for the “bread of life” and thirsting for “living water”, we will be “filled”

*“Blessed are the merciful, For they shall obtain mercy.”* Does your mercy know no bounds or have you fallen upon the thorns of unforgiveness and judgmentalism? Do you limit your mercy to those whom you consider deserving? God has freely given us His mercy and expects us to freely give mercy to all of His children. Being merciful means looking at everyone through Christ’s eyes rather than through our eyes: being merciful not only to the suffering but to those who cause the suffering.

*“Blessed are the pure in heart, For they shall see God.”* Is your heart free of conflict, fear, anger, and self-interest? If you cannot look past outward appearances to people’s hearts, then you have encountered the obstacle of the dark shadows, which hide the Light. Those who have “pure hearts” reflect Christ to all with whom they come into contact, and they see God in all things. Their Light illuminates the Way for not only themselves but for others.

*“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.”* Have you accepted Christ’s gift of Peace? If so, then you know that Christ’s Peace is the inward peace that comes when you live your life according to His guidance, placing your trust in Him. Be aware that the obstacle called Ego is lurking in every crevice of the path, waiting to pounce on your slightest thought of doubt and/or anger. Ego does not want you to live a God-centered life but wants you to live a self-centered life. Choose to be a peacemaker by imitating Christ - showing love, mercy, and forgiveness to all.

*“Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven. On this final footstep on the Way, fear and revenge are the obstacles waiting to attack you. You do not fear their attack since you have devoted your life to Christ, living a life imitating Him. You know how to respond to those who persecute you because Christ has not only taught you but shown you how He responded. You respond with Love, Mercy and Forgiveness for you are Christ’s Disciple.*



So, how is your journey along the Way progressing? Have you gone off course because you refuse to completely put your trust in God? What have you done to get back on course? Are you fully committed to Christ?

In the Beatitudes, Christ teaches about the commitment you must make if you want to transform your life. Living a God-centered life leads to true Peace and eternal life.

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### ***Desert Wisdom***

A hermit said to a brother, "When a proud or a vain thought enters your mind, examine your conscience to see if you are keeping God's commandments; ask yourself if you love your enemies; if you rejoice in your enemy's triumph, and if you are sad at his downfall; do you know yourself to be an unprofitable servant and a sinner beyond all others? But not even then must you think that you have corrected all your faults; to entertain such a thought as that would undo all the other good you have done."

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### ***Prayer Requests***

Mom LeClair  
Br. Yosi and Jim  
Linda and Wayne  
Carol and Leonard  
Bill and Monica  
Fr. David and family  
Our Lady of Peace Congregation  
Fr. Rick Hobbs  
Our Archbishop -- +Charles Smith, OSF

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